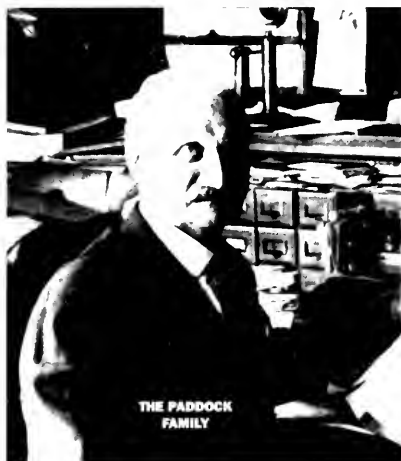
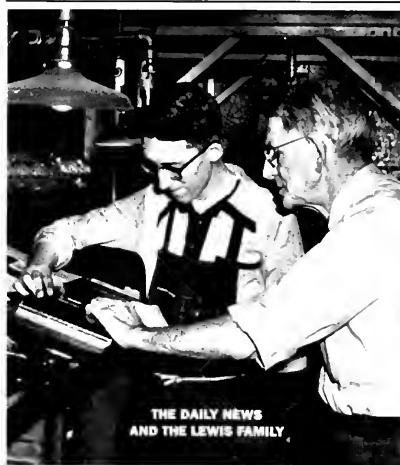
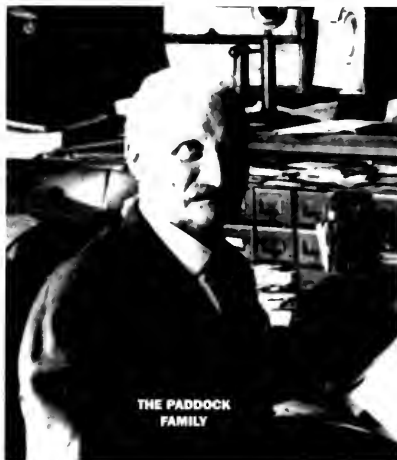


Family Legacies



Celebrating Illinois
Newspapers' Heritage

Family Legacies



Celebrating Illinois
Newspapers' Heritage

FAMILY LEGACIES

Foreword

This week — on November 20, 2003 — the Illinois Press Foundation celebrates the retirement of the mortgage of the Illinois Press Association's new headquarters in Springfield. It is the culmination of the support of the members and friends of the IPA and symbolizes the strength of the newspaper industry in Illinois.

One of the most generous contributors to the construction of the new building was the Shaw newspaper family, based in Dixon, Illinois. As part of the gift, the Shaws requested that we highlight and honor family-owned newspapers and community journalism in Illinois.

At the dedication of the new building just three and a half years ago, the first issue of the Family Newspaper Project was published, entitled "Family Values: Celebrating an Illinois Newspaper Tradition. The inaugural issue featured the McCormick family (McCormick Tribune Foundation), the Copley family (Copley Newspapers), the Chinigo family (*Champaign News-Gazette*), the Shaw family (B. F. Shaw Newspapers), the Macfarland family (*Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*), and the Small family (Small Newspaper Group).

The second issue, "Family Traditions: Celebrating Illinois Newspaper History," featured the Bliss family (*Montgomery County News*, Hillsboro), the Jenison family (*Paris Beacon-News*), the Jones family (Gold Nugget Publications, Virden) and the Oakley and Lindsay families (*The Quincy Herald-Whig*).

We are pleased to present the third issue dedicated to four more families in Illinois: the Paddock family (*Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights), the Campbell family (Calhoun Publishing Company, Hardin), the Lewis family (*Robinson Daily News*) and the Seil family (*Navigator Journal-Register*, Albion).

We hope you enjoy reading about the dedication, the sacrifice, the passion these families have for the communities they serve.

David L. Bennett

Executive Director, Illinois Press Association

071.773
5315
cop 2

102 8 10 10

Table of Contents



I.



II.



III.



IV.

I. The Paddock Family 6-11

II. The Campbells of Calhoun County 12-17

III. The Daily News and the Lewis Family 18-23

IV. Four Generations of the Seil Family 24-29



*Hosea C. Paddock refused to let challenges stop him from running a newspaper. He printed the early *Palatine Enterprise* on a hand press in the late 1800s. His tireless efforts led to what is the *Daily Herald* today.*

The Paddock Family

Some people dream of traveling the world. Some fantasize about owning endless riches.

Hosea C. Paddock, patriarch of the storied Paddock family, dreamed of having ink-stained fingers.

A headstrong man with a bad foot and an unwavering will, Hosea was one of those rare people who had newspapering in his blood.

THE PADDOCK FAMILY

"He never waxed enthusiastic about newspapers — he just worked at it," said Hosea's grandson, the late Robert Y. Paddock, Sr., who was the *Daily Herald's* vice chairman and executive vice president.

Started by Hosea in the 19th century, the journalistic history of the Paddock family contains enough drama to last several lifetimes.

Over the past century, the Paddocks have endured death, fires, two world wars, and a calamitous economic depression.

But the love of journalism kept the family involved in the unromantic world of ink, and the result of their work has produced the *Daily Herald*, now the third-largest newspaper in Illinois.

The *Daily Herald* has a circulation of more than 150,000, and blankets more than 90 communities across suburban Chicago.

The paper's success seemed an unlikely pipe dream more than a century ago when its founder, Hosea Cornish Paddock, was riding his horse Bonnie across the marshy land surrounding Chicago, trying to sell subscriptions to farmers.

The Paddock patriarch began his lengthy journalistic career as a reporter for several downstate newspapers, including the *Sterling Gazette*, the *Prophetstown Spike* and the *Morrison Sentinel*.

He toiled in 1880 as editor at the *Plainfield Enterprise*, then three years later, with five young mouths to feed, Hosea bought the *Wheaton Illinoisan*.

It was there that Hosea coined the iconic purpose statement that still appears in Paddock newspapers: "To Fear God, Tell the Truth and Make Money."

For five years he struggled to make the paper a successful weekly, but he was forced to sell it after a friend defaulted on a loan

Hosea had co-signed.

Hosea then purchased the *Rochelle Register*, but he felt that wasn't going to lead him to the big time. So he and a partner started the *Waukegan Register*.

Hosea's *Register* waged a gallant battle with the larger *Waukegan Gazette*, but in 1892 Hosea packed his bags and headed to Libertyville.

There, he began the *Lake County Independent*, hoping this finally would be his big move into the world of newspapering.

The paper came to an end on Aug. 30, 1895, when a massive fire raged through Libertyville's business district. The flames destroyed the *Independent's* office, and Hosea's insurance had lapsed earlier that week.

Hosea and wife Janette now had six children — and no source of income.

He salvaged the printing press and tried to produce the paper from his home, but eventually Hosea was forced to sell.

He worked as a school-teacher for a while. But journalism burned in his veins, so he resumed his quest for a newspaper to call his own.

He solicited subscriptions to his former newspaper and for Chicago papers, canvassing the local farms by horse and buggy.

If a farmer didn't have enough money for a subscription, Hosea often would take a bag of potatoes or oats in lieu of cash.

"Grandpa would sit on a farmer's plow and wouldn't leave until he got a subscription," said Stuart R. Paddock Jr., the *Daily Herald's* former chairman and publisher, who died April 15, 2002.

Often, his work kept him out so late that he fell asleep at the reins, but he would awaken to find that Bonnie had trotted them both safely home.



Hosea Cornish
Paddock

THE PADDOCK FAMILY



H.C. Paddock, fourth from left, and his printing crew pose in the old Herald office building. Included are sons Stuart, Sr., third from left, and Charles, far right.

Over the course of his travels in 1898, Hosea learned that the *Palatine Enterprise* was for sale.

The single-minded Hosea somehow came up with the funds, and so on Dec. 15, 1898, Justice of the Peace F. J. Filbert drew up a \$150 chattel mortgage contract between Hosea and W.C. Williams, the erstwhile owner of the *Enterprise*.

Filbert's handwritten document detailed the purchase of items including metal galleys, type racks, three stools and a stove.

The deal was sealed, and the 33-year-old Hosea had his newspaper. But that didn't mean things got easier.

Putting out the weekly paper (which soon became the *Enterprise-Register*) was an arduous task, made even more difficult by a foot deformity, present from birth, that left Hosea with a limp.

The two-page hand press required the

labor of two men — Hosea would pull from the massive lever from one side while 16-year-old son Stuart pushed from the other side.

After a few weeks, Hosea decided to print his paper downtown at the office of the Chicago Newspaper Union. So Hosea or son Charles would take a train and two streetcars to the office, lugging massive pages of hand-set type.

"Those pages were heavy," said Hosea's grandson, the late Stuart R. Paddock Jr. "They were all type," with most of the 100-plus pound load comprised of lead.

Often, Hosea gave the train conductors movie tickets so they would let him and his weighty cargo aboard.

Hosea wore many hats in his newspaper work, including renowned editorialist. He was known as a tough but fair man, as he showed in his writing about German immigrants: "There is no reason for criticizing our

THE PADDOCK FAMILY



The Herald office on Davis Street in Arlington Heights was struck by fire in 1938. "That Thanksgiving Day fire was the greatest bit of luck that ever happened to us," Stuart, Sr. once said. "It forced us to find another larger location."

German Americans. They believe in freedom and liberty, they are religious and the large majority are of the better element and are temperate in all things."

Hosea expanded his journalistic realm by purchasing the *Cook County Herald* in neighboring Arlington Heights on March 12, 1899.

Soon thereafter, he bought the *Arlington News*, and a couple years later he acquired a building with a printing press. No more trips to the city.

With sons Stuart and Charles now in the fold, the reach of "H.C. Paddock and Sons" soon spread across the flat suburban land.

Over the years, the company acquired the *DuPage County Register*, the *Franklin Park Beacon* and the *River Grove Herald*, among others.

In 1922, Hosea sold his papers to his sons, with Stuart working in editorial while Charles was in charge of production.

That didn't mean, however, that the stubborn Hosea went quietly into retirement. He continued as senior editor, and retained his notoriously untidy desk.

The 1920s were good to the Paddocks, and the *Herald* became a bi-weekly in 1926. (It went back to a weekly in 1930.)

The market grew tough in the thin years following the Great Depression, and the Paddocks were forced to sell some of their newspapers.

The family concentrated on the Palatine/Arlington Heights/Mount Prospect area and enlisted Stuart's three children — Robert, Stuart Jr. and Margie — in the newspaper effort.

The young Stuart worked as a "printer's devil," for instance, pouring molten "pig iron" into molds to make the letters for the press.

The "grand old man" Hosea wrote his last words in 1935, when he died at the age of 82. On his deathbed, he spoke of his hope that his grandsons would stay in the newspaper field: "I hope Stuart and Bob will continue in the business."

The two boys — and sister Margie — did indeed follow in the family's journalistic tradition. All three went to college (no small feat in early 20th century), and Robert and Margie came back to work for the newspaper.

Stu, however, had more bohemian ideas. After graduating from Knox College in Galesburg, Ill., he hit the road.

"I was hitchhiking out to the West Coast to see if I could find a job," Paddock said. "I



Under the leadership of from left, Robert Paddock, Sr., Stuart Paddock, Jr. and Margie Flanders, shown in this 1995 photo, the Daily Herald enjoyed phenomenal growth.

made it as far as Cheyenne, Wyoming."

Cold, tired and broke, Paddock was stuck. Intimidated by the hobos riding the rail and having spent "my last nickel on a sweet roll in the gas station," Paddock didn't know whether to forge on or turn back.

He decided to place his fate in the hands of others, thumbing rides in both directions.

If he caught a ride West, he could end up picking vegetables. If he caught a ride East, he'd stay in the family newspaper business.

"I was throwing stones at a telephone pole when a car honked," he recalled. "Two parents, two little kids and a grandmother. They were going all the way to Indiana."

The family went out of its way to drop Paddock off in Clinton, Iowa, where he had an aunt who gave him \$20 and a place to sleep until he could hitchhike back to Palatine.

With Stu back in the fold, the Paddocks moved onward — until another disaster struck: a fire on Thanksgiving Day in 1938 struck the Paddock's main office in Arlington Heights.

This conflagration, though, turned out to be a mixed blessing.



Ann M. Paddock



*Marcella
"Marcie"
M. Paddock*

"That Thanksgiving Day fire was the greatest bit of luck that's ever happened to us," Stuart Sr. once said. "It forced us to find another, larger location."

The company (which became known as Paddock Publications Inc. in 1948) built a new building, and its journalistic reach spread even further. The Paddocks began producing weeklies in myriad suburbs, including Wheeling, Bensenville, Prospect Heights and Rolling Meadows.

The paper came under attack in 1966, when Marshall Field and his Sun-Times started a daily suburban newspaper called *The Day*.

Over the next four years, the weekly *Herald* newspapers lost 40 percent of their circulation. A plan to publish three times a week bombed.

"We either had to go daily or die," Stu Jr. decided.

Following the deaths of Charles Paddock in 1967 and Stuart Paddock Sr. in 1968, Stu Jr. gained controlling interest of the paper by acquiring the stock owned by Charles Paddock's son-in-law Frank Stites and combining it with his own.

He shared ownership with brother Robert and sister Margie S. Flanders.

Day Publications eventually surrendered and sold its newspaper operations to Paddock Publications on June 19, 1970.

To buy Field out, the Paddock family had to bring in outside investors. Some of those investors put pressure on the family to sell the paper and make a quick profit. Larger newspaper publishers were eager to buy out the Paddock family.

"I never considered that," Stuart Jr. said.

THE PADDOCK FAMILY



Robert Paddock Jr.



Stuart R. Paddock III

"We're trying to see to it that this paper remains a family business."

—Stuart Paddock Jr.

But it wasn't merely his decision. Robert and Margie resisted that temptation, as well.

Eventually, the company managed to buy back that stock, placing it in an employee retirement trust.

In his time as head of the company, Stuart Paddock Jr. constantly pushed expansion. The *Herald* became a five-days-a-week paper in 1969, and the name changed to "Daily Herald" in 1977. (A Saturday edition began in 1975, and a Sunday edition was added in 1978.) Paddock added more weekly papers in Lake County in the 1970s that went daily in 1984.

After that, Paddock oversaw nearly 20 expansions into areas of Lake, DuPage, Kane, McHenry and Will counties.

He often spoke of his hope that the paper would remain in the family after his passing and worked with lawyers to try to ensure it would.

"We're trying to see to it that this paper remains a family business," he said repeatedly.

Under the guidance of Stuart Jr., Robert and Margie, the paper grew exponentially. The paper now has a daily circulation 150,300

and covers more than 90 communities throughout the greater Chicago region, from Naperville in the south all the way up to Lindenhurst in the north.

In 1995, the *Daily Herald's* main offices moved to a modern building with a large, airy atrium in Arlington Heights — a far cry from the days of the cramped, musty wooden building where Hosea toiled.

And in 2003, the paper began printing at a new \$50 million printing center in Schaumburg, featuring a state-of-the-art press built in Germany.

The three Paddocks have since passed on — Margie S. Flanders died in 1997, Robert Y. in 1999 and Stuart in 2002. A fourth generation of Paddocks, Robert Paddock Jr. and Stuart R. Paddock III, continue the family's newspaper legacy.

The paper still carries the Paddock family's can-do spirit, and it still works under the motto Hosea coined back when he was trekking across the suburban plains: "Local news first, the world next."



In this classic photograph from the early years of The Calhoun News, C.C. Campbell was captured by professional photographer Robert Mortland hand setting type on a stick. The photograph is titled, "Deadline Every Thursday."

The Campbells of Calhoun County

For three generations, the Campbells of Calhoun County have told the stories of west central Illinois – and have lived them.

From C.C. Campbell who founded *The Calhoun News* in 1915 to his grandson, Bruce Campbell who launched a new weekly newspaper, *Jersey County Journal*, in June 2003, the Campbells have been journalists who see and celebrate the milestones of their friends and neighbors.

Bruce Campbell remembers his grandfather as a storyteller, a man who knew his readers on a personal basis and lived his life as part of the community they shared.

"Their life was so self-contained in Calhoun County," Bruce Campbell recalls. A trip outside the narrow strip of Calhoun, bordered as it is by the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, was an infrequent experience for C.C. Campbell, his employees or his readers. In large part, through the first half of the 20th century, the Calhoun community worked, played and shared their stories together.

"My grandfather was quite a storyteller. He always had stories to tell. People would come in and pay their subscription and they'd want to talk." C.C. Campbell was always ready to oblige and from these conversations sprang the spirit of his newspaper, a focus on the lives of readers that is emphasized by the newspapers of Campbell Publications to this day.

Bruce Campbell began working with his grandfather at the age of six, assigned the Saturday job of sweeping out the pressroom. By this time, Bruce Campbell's father, James F. Campbell, was also part of the family business. Roles and responsibilities evolved over the years but three generations worked together until C.C. Campbell's death at age 87 in 1970.

C.C. Campbell helped put out the newspaper the day of his death. His obituary noted, "Publisher Campbell had worked at the office until 3 p.m., and when everything was fin-

ished with that week's issue, walked to his home and sat down in his usual place on the breezeway sofa where he slumped over and passed peacefully to his heavenly home, after a long, useful and happy life, during which he

had seen that thousands of issues were published, comprised of millions of words of news, births, marriages, obituaries and everything that told of life in Calhoun County.

"He felt people read enough sordid things in the daily papers so he tried to keep *The Calhoun News* merely a chronicle of 'life as it happened in Calhoun County.' "

Except for a year in Chicago and a year in East St. Louis, C.C. Campbell lived his entire life in Calhoun County. His son, James F. Campbell, began working at the newspaper as a child. He attended Shurtleff College in Alton and the University of Chicago. As a journalist, he was a tireless supporter of Calhoun County and generated thousands of words during his career about tourism, business and economic growth for the area. He owned and published a tourist magazine, "Hello Stranger," in southwest Florida during the 1950s.

"My dad was quite a storyteller, too, because he remembered so much from his father and was influenced by these

stories," Bruce Campbell said. "I think this storytelling ability was translated through the written word into the news pages. It was a gift they both had which was well-suited for the profession."

During his retirement years in Naples, Fla., James Campbell would readily recall one of



With the steady tick of the Regulator clock for company, C.C. Campbell worked with ink stained fingers to lock up the chase. The year was 1965.

Roles and responsibilities evolved over the years but three generations worked together until C.C. Campbell's death at age 87 in 1970.



In 1965, C.C. Campbell worked at feeding the press.

the biggest stories he ever covered – a botched bank robbery attempt at the Bank of Kampsville in the 1950s.

Two armed men entered the home of Harry and Lela Waldheuser on a Sunday night with the intent of having Waldheuser, who was manager of the Bank of Kampsville, open the safe at the bank. However, the bank was on a timer and would not open until the next morning. Kampsville residents became suspicious and surrounded the Waldheuser house. Waldheuser was killed in a car accident north of Kampsville as the men attempted to escape with the Waldheusers as hostages.

James Campbell died May 5, 2003. His obituary echoed that of his father: "Jim Campbell chronicled the birth, life and death of countless thousands of Calhoun County residents."

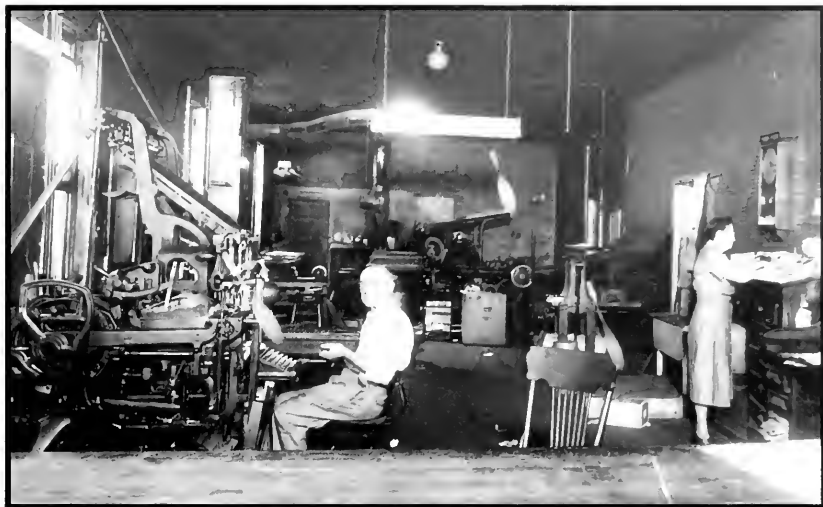
For Bruce Campbell, the defining story of

his journalism career was the rising rivers of the Flood of 1993, which effectively isolated Calhoun County from normal ingress and egress. He boated over flood-swamped fields, took pictures, wrote stories and made provisions for the weekly ordeal of getting his newspapers printed and delivered. National Guard troops were camped across the street and members of various relief organizations used his newspaper as the information source victims so desperately needed.

"That's something we lived. It was like being right in the middle of a war zone. It had a psychological effect on me – devastating because we knew these people. They were a part of our lives. We lived it with them."

The expansion of Campbell Publications began with the third generation. A graduate of Westminster College in Fulton, Mo., Bruce Campbell earned a Master of Arts degree from the School of Journalism at the

THE CAMPBELL FAMILY



The Calkoun News office in Hardin as it appeared in 1938 under the ownership of C.C. and Gertrude Campbell.

University of Missouri in Columbia. Following two years in the U.S. Army as a company commander, he returned to the family business and began an expansion of the commercial printing department. He also shepherded the newspaper into the age of offset reproduction and later into computers and electronic pagination.

His recollections of the evolution of *The Calkoun News* include detailed knowledge of the hot metal printing process gleaned from personal experience.

Printing in the days of his father and grandfather was a dangerous operation. "We'd melt big pots of metal, scalding hot lead, using gas and open flames." A miscue brought painful consequences. "I still have scars on my feet from the hot lead that landed on my sock and burned through."

Avoiding such "squirts" of hot metal meant chases of type needed to be tightly filled and locked. For both hot metal and handset type, writing to fill was an art.

"They had to hand set the newspaper each week. Each letter of every word was a piece of type. It would have to be individually picked out and placed in the stick. After the newspaper was published, it was returned to the type case.

"My grandfather was, as most newspapermen were in that era, excellent at writing as he composed on the stick. Not only that but filling the exact number of lines he needed in the chase. My father could do the same on linotype. Someone would say, 'We need a three line local' and he could fill it up."

Not to be forgotten in the development of Campbell Publications are the women of the family. C.C.'s wife, Gertrude, came to Calhoun from Chicago. "She was a vital part of the business and learned to operate the linotype."

Bruce's mother, Louise Campbell, was a stay-at-home mother for him, his brother and sister, but also found time to be heavily involved in the bookkeeping and accounting side of the business, also helping out with spe-

cial promotions. Now retired in Florida, Louise Campbell remains as both a sounding board and source of advice for her son.

"Her Christian influence permeated our family," Bruce Campbell said. The greatest formative impact on his business philosophy has been "her Christian witness to me," he added.

As the 20th century drew to a close, it remained for Bruce Campbell to take the family's passion for journalism beyond the borders of their beloved Calhoun County.

He began the expansion with the purchase in 1990 of *The Weekly Messenger* in Pleasant Hill. In 1992, he added the *Pike Press* in Pittsfield to the company. *The Greene Prairie Press* in Carrollton and the *Scott County Times* in Winchester were purchased in 1998 and the newest publication, the *Jersey County Journal* in Jerseyville, was started in 2003.

The six newspapers have a combined readership of more than 75,000 persons every week and serve five contiguous counties in west central Illinois — Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Pike and Scott.

The company newspapers have won numerous regional and state press association awards; *Pike Press* won the Harold and Eva White Memorial Trophy in 1996 from the Illinois Press Association as the best weekly in its circulation category and has consistently won the general excellence award in various press association contests on the regional and state level.

From his earliest day with a broom in the print shop to the upcoming six issues of his

newspapers, Bruce Campbell continues to see journalism as the perfect melding of life and vocation.

He recalls hearing about his grandfather working in a hot press room to put that week's issue to bed, then joining his employees and the occasional passerby in a friendly game of horseshoes, just outside the newspaper office.

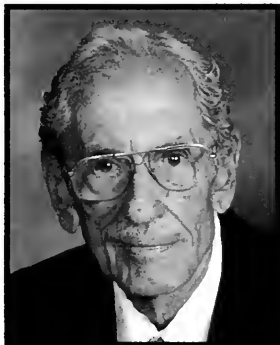
"They worked hard but they also had a lot of gratification and satisfaction by the personal relationships they had." This balance of hard work and taking time to play "helped relieve some of their stress which is naturally a part of newspaper deadlines." Today Bruce Campbell will often be seen encouraging his employees to step outside, take a break and simply observe a moment of the day God has given.

"I try to conduct my business based on my Christian beliefs to treat everyone fairly. My employees are the reason I have been successful in the newspaper business for more than 35 years. Every employee has contributed to the company and each one has a special place in my heart. They are my family and I value each one."

Bruce Campbell recommends a stint on a weekly newspaper as the best possible postgraduate education for

aspiring journalists. "In small communities we have access to every newsmaker such as police, school, government on a daily basis. The large dailies can't offer the same variety and experience."

While Bruce Campbell doesn't claim to be the storyteller his grandfather was, or his father was, he says the vocation of journalist



James F. Campbell

**"Jim Campbell chronicled
the birth, life and death of
countless thousands of
Calhoun County residents."**

—James F. Campbell's obituary





"I try to conduct my business based on my Christian beliefs to treat everyone fairly. My employees are the reason I have been successful in the newspaper business for more than 35 years. Every employee has contributed to the company and each one has a special place in my heart. They are my family and I value each one."

—Bruce Campbell



In June 2003, Bruce Campbell inspects the first issue of the Jersey County Journal, fresh off the press.

is his both by birthright and experience. "I am a very inquisitive person. I definitely inherited the inquisitive nature of a journalist."

And those who ask questions will hear the stories of the lives of their friends and neighbors, the stories that the newspapers of Campbell Publications strive to tell.

"James Michener wrote something that sums up how I feel about having been able to live my life in newspapers," Bruce Campbell said.

MASTERS IN THE ART OF LIVING

*Masters in the art of living
make little distinction between
their work and their play,
their minds and their bodies,
their labor, their leisure,
their information, their recreation,
their love and their religion.
They simply pursue their vision of
excellence at whatever it is they do,
leaving others to decide whether
they are working or playing
because to them
they are always doing both.*

"I love my life and I love what I do. They're intertwined," Bruce Campbell said. "I have loved my career every day and look forward to a new challenge each morning. I have a great life and the best job in the world."





Circa 1955, Clyde Smith (right), Daily News commercial printing manager, goes over the fine points of a letterpress printing job with Larry Gullett, who still works for the Daily News in the advertising department.

The Daily News and the Lewis Family

In 1919, the *Daily News* hit the streets for the first time as a bold answer to the question, “Can Robinson support a daily newspaper?”

Eighty-four years and three generations of Lewises later, the answer is still “yes.” The *Daily News* was founded by F. Wood Lewis in 1919. At the time, Lewis was editor and publisher of the *Robinson Constitution* — a weekly that began publication in 1863, which the 38-year-old former teacher and lawyer bought in 1902.

But could Robinson, a town of 3,300 in a township of 6,000, support a daily paper? Would there even be enough news to fill a paper each day?

It didn't take long for these questions to be answered. Under the direction of Lewis and business manager John W. Dyer of Mt. Carmel, the paper flourished. Fewer than two weeks after the first issue on June 16, circulation reached nearly 800. Nine months later, it was 1,200. With city carrier delivery and rural mail delivery, subscription rates the first year were \$5 per year in-town and \$4 per year out-of-town.

Of course, the look and content of the newspaper was a far cry from the *Daily News* of today. Besides the regular news of the day, the *Daily News* occasionally carried romantic adventure serials by well-known novelists, such as Booth Tarkington.

Daily News headlines were different, too, before objectivity was a journalistic watchword. If an old couple got married, the headline usually read, "Old Enough to Know Better." If a 17-year-old and an 18-year old were married, it might read "Children Wed." Divorces were announced by "Two More Couples Split Blanket."

Lewis was indeed a colorful editor, in the style of the time. He and the editor of the *Hutsenville Herald* had a presumably friendly feud going in the summer of 1919 that started when a *Hutsenville* editor identified in the *Daily News* files only as "Anderson," printed the following:

"The swimming season is in full blast and evidence of this fact is noticeable in more ways than one. Almost every day visitors to the beach at this place are seen parading out on the streets clad in scanty and ridiculous bathing suits and numerous complaints are

heard from our citizens who have some degree of decency. This practice should be stopped and violators of the following ordinance should take notice and heed before they find themselves brought up before some officer of the law. One or two arrests along this line will put a stop to this practice of indecency...."

To which Lewis replied:

"Evidently Editor Anderson is not of an artistic turn, otherwise he would see nothing but art in the classic display of which we begrudge him. Or perhaps he needs goggles. Speaking thusly, we of course, have in mind the young ladies of Robinson who want to visit the beach — Venus de Milo had nothing on them."

Adding fuel to the fire, Lewis asked the young women of Robinson to read Anderson's attack on scanty swimwear and decide if they wanted to sue for libel. He said the girls could win their case because "any jury in the land would decide for you, providing you wore the suits in court."

Anderson responded: "It is true that the *Herald* editor needs goggles when some of the Robinson girls appear on the streets here displaying charms that were never

intended for exhibition purposes. He also needs blinders, a check-rein, and martingales if he is to continue to walk the straight and narrow path and every other man in this town needs the same thing if he is to visit Main Street on any warm Sunday afternoon."

Fernando Wood Lewis, known as "F.W.," the man who crafted this lively brand of early-century newspapering, was born in 1864 in Lewiston, Ohio. His parents moved to Crawford County near Porterville.

F.W. attended the Porterville School until the family moved to Robinson; his father



Fernando Wood (F.W.) Lewis,

opened a general store, where Wood worked.

In 1880, F.W. was one of the first students of Robinson Township High School, and was the first and only high-school graduate of his class.

His first job was as a schoolteacher, until he was admitted to the Illinois bar at the age of 24. He spent four years as a lawyer, partnered with P.G. Bradbury, until he was elected Crawford County State's Attorney — described as "no mean job," considering the number of murder trials in the county at the time.

After his term in the courthouse expired, F.W. bought the *Robinson Constitution* from John S. Abbott. He would remain in the newspaper business for nearly 50 years until his death in 1950.

Not one to shy away from civic involvement, F.W. also served as city clerk, alderman and mayor of Robinson. He was usually on the temperance side of hot elections in which liquor licenses were an issue. He was also instrumental in securing a glass factory, a boiler factory, a cement block factory, and the old Wabash Refinery.

The story of his role in saving the refinery paints Wood Lewis as a "mover and shaker" in the volatile oil-boom years of Crawford County.

The Wabash Refinery was started in 1917 by the "Lowrey interests," mainly F. C. Lowrey, his son, Forest, and W.E. Krohn. But in 1921 business was so bad the plant closed down. About 30 of the 125 employees were laid off, and the rest would be as soon as all of the stocks on hand were used up.

In February of that year, the refinery had its first labor disturbance. Two successive pay cuts would have slashed wages 15 to 20 percent. Many laborers quit, but later about 60

percent returned.

The refinery still had promise, though, and Lewis knew it. He backed oilman Thomas Flynn, who bought the 20 acres and the complete plant, but not its 70 railroad tank cars.

Finally in November 1921 a new operation was organized. Lincoln Oil Co. was capitalized for \$1 million, was largely rebuilt, and quickly had a 1,000 barrel per day capacity of crude. In late April 1922, a new cracking plant was built to recover gasoline and other more valuable products. The operating force of 41 men handled nearly twice the amount of crude the original 125 men had handled a few years earlier.

The refinery was sold on June 6, 1924 to the Ohio Oil Co. and the plant was immediately placed at full production. Two years later the plant was enlarged.

Of course, the rest is history, with the purchase of the refinery by Marathon, now Marathon Ashland, constant expansion and a workforce of more than 600 employees today.

FW's son, Kent Van Lewis, entered the University of Illinois in 1922 and earned his journalism degree in 1927. He

edited the *Daily Illini's* literary magazine and worked at a suburban Chicago newspaper until returning to his hometown in 1929 to assume the role of editor and publisher of the *Daily News*.

In 1943 he enlisted in the Marine Corps, served in the Pacific and rose to the rank of major. In 1948, following his father's political footsteps, he was elected as a Democratic state senator.

Vernon Heath, a member of another well-known Robinson family (the Heaths of English toffee candy fame), presented Lewis with the Robinson Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizen Award in 1965. His



Kent Van Lewis

THE LEWIS FAMILY



K.V. Lewis poses with his family during a re-election campaign for his Democratic Illinois Senate seat.

presentation highlighted many of Lewis' contributions to the community.

"Through hard work and tireless effort, Kent was largely responsible for the 7-1 favorable vote on the new county hospital in the 1958 referendum," Heath said. "He backed the Washington School and other important school improvements and bond issues...as a member of the steering committee for the proposed junior college district for this area [Lincoln Trail College was established in 1969], Kent has been a key spokesman at many of the public and state meetings...and has testified before the Junior College Board in Chicago and elsewhere in support of this project."

While he continued his father's tradition of community involvement, Kent Lewis also continued his tradition of spirited journalistic give-and-take, with his columns and his "edi-

tor's notes" following readers' letters to the editor.

"He is noted for his sharp but fair answers to the 'Letters to the Editor' and he enjoys disarming many of his letter-writer critics," Heath said, "as he is quick to challenge statements that he feels do not always state the issues or the facts correctly."

Here's an excerpt from a Lewis "editor's note" circa 1965, responding to a letter complaining about loose dogs:

"While we have every sympathy with persons whose sleep is disturbed, there has to be a compromise between those who want to keep dogs and those who are bothered by them..."

"Also, dogs which bark are not at all likely to be barking for food and water. Much more likely they are telling a passing cat what they would do if they had their freedom,



“Kent was not just my mentor, he was my master mentor. I had lots of mentors (I was a slow learner) but only Kent took a high-school educated kid and taught him to not only write, but later to edit, and more importantly how to put up with people, both good and bad.”

—*Illinois Press Association Past President Byron Tracy.*

objecting to some stranger in the neighborhood or just discussing matters among themselves, as is the nature of dogs.

“Under the circumstances we would advise that the letter writer secure wax ear plugs and use them during sleep.”

Lewis also exerted his influence in more serious matters. As a chamber board member, Lewis saw that although some progress had been made in landing new industry, many other opportunities had been missed because volunteer efforts were either too small, too late, or overmatched by other areas’ professional organizations.

He and a small group of other chamber members envisioned a county-wide organization, headed by a professional, working for industry in every part of the county. The group sparked the formation of Crawford County Opportunities, Inc., and the county-wide effort continues today as the Crawford County Development Association.

Kent Lewis’ legacy of community involvement has carried forward into recent years, when in the 1990s the *Daily News* played a part in the successful effort to attract a prison to Crawford County, and later in neighboring Lawrence County. In the Lewis tradition, *Daily News* personnel have a tradition of being active in the community, serving on various boards and committees.

The Lewises expanded their newspaper holdings into Lawrence County in 1967, buy-

ing the *Lawrenceville Daily Record* from the Armstrong family in January 1967, followed by the purchase later that year of the *Lawrence County News*.

“Kent was not just my mentor, he was my master mentor,” long-time *Daily News* editor and Illinois Press Association Past President Byron Tracy said. “I had lots of mentors (I was a slow learner) but only Kent took a high-school educated kid and taught him to not only write, but later to edit, and more importantly how to put up with people, both good and bad.”

“I’ll never forget his cigar, his scotch on ice, his dry and sometimes caustic humor,” Tracy recalled. “Once, when I asked him what in the world he expected me to put in a suicide story he had assigned this cub reporter, he never missed a beat, ‘I want to know the last time he slept with his wife ... and how!’”

When Tracy “graduated” to reading Lewis’ copy he once asked the editor, why, with all his education and experience, he couldn’t spell ‘occurred.’

“That’s why I have you around,” Lewis said.

“Kent taught me more about understanding people than anyone I’ve known throughout my many years,” Tracy recalled. “Once I caught him putting a quarter under a desk. I asked what he was doing and he said he was testing a new cleaning lady to see if she was doing her job. ‘Why not a nickel?’ I asked, and

THE LEWIS FAMILY



Larry H. Lewis, third-generation Daily News publisher, keeps his hand in the day-to-day operation of his newspapers by working in the backshop during a press run.

he said, "She might not pick up a nickel, but she damned will a quarter, no more than I pay her!"

Kent Lewis died June 22, 1975, leaving the paper to his son, Larry H. Lewis.

Larry, now in his 28th year as publisher, has served on the board of directors for the First National Bank of Robinson, and followed in the activist footsteps of his father and grandfather, as president of Robinson Chamber of Commerce and working with the former Crawford County Opportunities and local businesses in promoting the community's economy.

Lewis, while making sure the business continues to prosper, has also strongly supported his editors and reporters in freedom of information, open meetings and other news-side issues — and has made sure they have the resources to maintain the newspaper's

commitment to comprehensive local news coverage.

Despite being one of the smallest daily newspapers in the state, the *Daily News* has kept on the cutting edge of technology.

In the beginning, the paper was printed on an old Mehle flatbed press that had to be fed by hand, with the paper then turned over and fed through again.

Today, the newspaper's six-unit offset press can produce 10,000 papers per hour, and editors and reporters work with computerized page layout, digital photography, e-mail and Internet resources. At this writing, the *Daily News* is expanding its use of process color, updating its pre-press workflow with an imagesetter, and its website, *Daily News Online*, is being "reborn" with greater functionality and revenue potential.



Noland B. Seil at Langley Field in 1919

Four generations of the Seil Family

By Leandra Sullivan

Grayville is a small town with a big history, having risen along the banks of the Wabash River to offer fame and fortune, notoriety and despair. It has experienced the birth and decline of a rich oil boom; taken life from the river only to later see the Wabash change course and move away; and more recently, city leaders convinced state officials to site a new prison there, only to have construction halted by a budget crisis.

Between father and son, William J. and Noland Seil encompassed nearly 80 years in the Grayville newspaper trade and were deeply involved in community and regional affairs.

Among Noland's campaigns as editor, two considered the most outstanding were his drive for location of Interstate Route 64 through his community, and a lifelong battle for Wabash Valley improvement.



It is a community that is at once refined and hardscrabble, its uniqueness shaped by rowdy rivermen and oilfield tycoons and roughnecks. Chronicling and helping define this history has been a series of newspapers — the *Mercury*, the *Independent*, and the *Navigator*. And the men who have been largely responsible for their existence constitute four generations of the Seil family.

Their tradition began with *The Mercury-Independent*, which was a consolidation of the *Independent*, established in 1857, and the *Mercury*, established in 1888. In 1919, the latter acquired the former, and was published by W.J. Seil and Son. That son was Noland Blair Seil.

William J. moved to Grayville from Lacon in 1891, when the town, seated on the bank of the Wabash River on the Edwards/White counties line, was still a toddler, officially chartered only in 1855.

After 19 years, William gave up his editorial position, but retained ownership. He then moved his family to California, where he took a position teaching printing in a Los Angeles



*Noland B. Seil
in the early 1960s*

trade school. In Grayville, two other men took turns as editor of the local paper, stints that totaled less than three years. In early October 1912, William J. was again the publisher and editor, with 17-year-old high school student Noland listed as local editor. Over the next few years, Noland attended business college in Evansville, Ind., served on the staff of the *Owensboro Daily Messenger* in Kentucky, and joined the United States Army during World War I. By 1919, he was listed as a partner of the

Mercury-Independent. He shortly thereafter took a bride, Margaret Schrontz. After a brief honeymoon in St. Louis, the couple returned to Grayville, and Noland began what has been defined as a 50-year love affair with the *Mercury-Independent*.

Between father and son, William J. and Noland encompassed nearly 80 years in the Grayville newspaper trade and were deeply involved in community and regional affairs. Among Noland's campaigns as editor, two considered the most outstanding were his drive for location of Interstate Route 64



Lt. William S. Seil (left) and his brother, Col. Manning Seil (right)

through his community, and a lifelong battle for Wabash Valley improvement.

Noland was posthumously honored as a "Master Editor" by the Southern Illinois Editorial Association and the Southern Illinois University Department of Journalism. His publication won numerous awards, and his editorials were reprinted in metropolitan papers including the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Noland's son, William S. Seil, graduated from Grayville High School in 1938, then went on to attend the University of Illinois in Champaign. Shortly thereafter he joined the Army Air Corps, serving as a bomber pilot until the end of World War II. He served in the North African and Sicily campaigns, flying a total of 90 missions in a P-40 aircraft.

His string of missions ended when he was

shot down in Italy. The plane took a hit, was on fire, and after a few different maneuvers, the young pilot was finally able to eject, landing behind enemy lines. Discovered by a Scottish patrol, he was returned to safety and later sent stateside to recuperate. It was during that hiatus he met a dark-haired Massachusetts lass named Mary Mungovan, who would later become his wife.

The couple returned to Champaign, with William taking a position at the *News Gazette*. Eventually, however, he returned to southern Illinois and his father's publication. Grayville was, after all, his hometown, and the *Mercury-Independent* had become a family tradition.

Back at home, William continued to run the newspaper after his father's death in 1968, until his own demise from cancer and a heart

William became a fixture in Grayville, putting out the town's home paper, serving as fire chief for 33 years and raising three children —

sons John and Patrick, and daughter Donna.

W.S. Seil also earned the distinction of "Master Editor," and guided the newspaper to several SIEA and Illinois Press Association awards.



attack on June 21, 1987. During those years, he became a fixture in Grayville, putting out the town's home paper, serving as fire chief for 33 years and raising three children — sons John and Patrick, and daughter Donna. W.S. Seil also earned the distinction of "Master Editor," and guided the newspaper to several SIEA and Illinois Press Association awards.

William Seil and long-time *Albion Journal-Register* publisher Dean Bunting jointly created the *Prairie Post* in 1981. While it served primarily as an area shopper, it also became known as the carrier of feature articles chronicling the obvious and obscure happenings and inhabitants of southeastern Illinois. "At that point it was envisioned as more entertaining than anything," Patrick recalls. "Good news to make readers *feel* good."

After William's death, the fate of the *Mercury-Independent* fell to his heirs. With little available cash, the paper was viewed as the last asset that could be liquidated to close out the late publisher's estate. It was sold to Bunting in 1988, who shortly thereafter sold it to Hollinger International, a Canadian-based conglomerate then actively buying up community newspapers throughout Illinois. Hollinger took possession of not only the *Mercury-Independent*, but also of the *Albion Journal-Register* and *Prairie Post*. Ironically, it was that year the Grayville paper claimed the Illinois Press Association's Verle V. Kramer Trophy — state recognition for outstanding accom-

plishment by a small weekly.

Patrick Seil, a 1981 journalism graduate of the U. of I., was the only one of William S. Seil's children to remain in journalism and returned to Grayville after graduation to work alongside his father. Patrick Seil continued as editor of the *Mercury-Independent* until January 1990, when he accepted a position with the Fairfield-based *Wayne County Press*. As reporter and photographer in Fairfield, he primarily covered "sports and courts." It proved to be an instrumental period for him. Despite having grown up in, and cutting his journalistic teeth on, the family business, he still admits he earned a good education at the *Press*. "And it gave me a realistic business model to aspire to," he says.

His desire to return to the helm and reclaim family history was sparked in April 1995 at an SIEA meeting in Carbondale. Patrick joined a group of 60 other newspaper people, most of them owners of their own publications. He sat there thinking "Self, you're no longer one of those guys.

"So, I went home and whined bitterly to JoEllen (the former JoEllen Gaither, whom he married in 1985), who basically proceeded to tell me to do something about it," he says. "And that's when the great adventure began."

He decided to begin another newspaper from scratch. Leaving the *Press*, he hit the bricks during the dog days of July and August 1995 and began peddling subscriptions up and down the streets.

With about \$75,000 from small business and city revolving loans, the *Navigator* was born. That money leased a building, bought three computers, printer, scanner, Nikon camera and developing tanks, among other things. Patrick Seil knew then it was important to try and keep ahead of the technological curve.



With about \$75,000 from small business and city revolving loans, the *Navigator* was born. That money leased a building, bought three computers, printer, scanner, Nikon camera and developing tanks, among other things. Seil knew then it was important to try and keep ahead of the technological curve.

However, "The first issue was a gut-wrenching nightmare," Patrick recalls. "Everything that could go wrong went wrong." In fact, the new publisher at one point threatened to throw himself in the drink — the now stagnant bend of the Wabash River. Deadlines were missed, papers were late, and paperboys had gone home. Friends and family pitched in to toss the tabloid-sized publication onto lawns — whether or not their owners were subscribers. That was Aug. 30, 1995.

Many long nights and weeks were to follow building the newspaper's readership and advertising base. It was obviously time well invested, and apparent when in April 1996 Hollinger's regional manager contacted Patrick hoping to sell him the old *Mercury-Independent*. Finally reaching a figure within his means, the youngest child of William reclaimed the family legacy. However, his new paper was doing too much business under the *Navigator* name to return to the old flag. Still, the acquisition was sentimentally satisfying, and the pot was made sweeter when Liberty Group Publishing, the successor to Hollinger, sold Seil the *Albion Journal-Register* and *Prairie Post* in July 1998. But it was a mixed bag.

"On one hand it was great, because I was reunited with my old mentor (Bunting),"

according to Patrick. "But the old building was in bad shape, equipment was antiquated, there was no staff, and there was only one point-and-shoot camera in the place." The *AJR* had fallen on hard times, with little advertising base. It and the *Post* were diminished to only four pages each week.

Seil folded the titles of the two paid newspapers into *The Navigator & Journal-Register*, paying homage to the history of the Albion paper, established in 1869. Eventually, the staff and buildings melded into one operation, with the Albion office serving as the primary business and editorial department and the Grayville facility focused on production. The *NJR* and the *Post* are printed off-site by the *Olney Daily Mail*.

The *Navigator* put together a string of three consecutive first place awards for general excellence in the annual SIEA Better Newspaper Contest, scoring in the small weekly category in 1998 and in the large weekly division in 1999 and 2000.

On Jan. 1, 2001, Seil strengthened his product by taking on a partner, well-known community newspaper publisher Jerry Reppert of Anna. Reppert, who would provide managerial expertise to the newly formed S&R Media, LLC, is a past SIEA and IPA president; is on the board of directors of the National Newspaper Association and chairman of the Illinois Press Foundation.

The *Navigator & Journal-Register* now publishes an average of 22 pages per week, its news and advertising content expanded regionally around the central towns of Albion and Grayville. Circulation has grown



Patrick and JoEllen Seil with their daughter Jessica

“You’ll never learn as much as you do from losing everything. And it’s satisfying because I’ve reclaimed those touchstones that were so much a part of my life.”



to 3,400. The *Prairie Post* has become a major area advertising vessel, and goes into 13,100 homes each week. Insert business has grown nicely, according to Seil, and the company continues to take on more commercial design and specialty publication work. The staff, counted on one hand in the early days of the *Navigator*, has expanded to nine full-time employees, and four part-time. Seil is fond of saying, “I’ve always been fortunate to find the best people at the best times.”

Patrick Seil has known from a young age

that journalism was in his blood, though he never dreamed the trials he would endure to re-establish the family business. “But there is something to be said for building from scratch,” he says. “You’ll never learn as much as you do from losing everything. And it’s satisfying because I’ve reclaimed those touchstones that were so much a part of my life.”

It’s been a meandering path for Seil and his newspaper. Nevertheless, with a cargo of history and a bow turned toward the future, it’s now the *Navigator & Journal-Register’s* time to sail.

Contributors:

PADDOCK FAMILY

Jim Cook, Joel Reese, Ginny Lee

Photos courtesy of the *Daily Herald*.

LEWIS FAMILY

Greg Bilbrey

Photos courtesy of the *Robinson Daily News*.

CAMPBELL FAMILY

Bruce Campbell, Julie Boren

Photos courtesy of the Campbell family and *The Calhoun News*.

SEIL FAMILY

Leandra Sullivan

Photos courtesy of the Seil family.

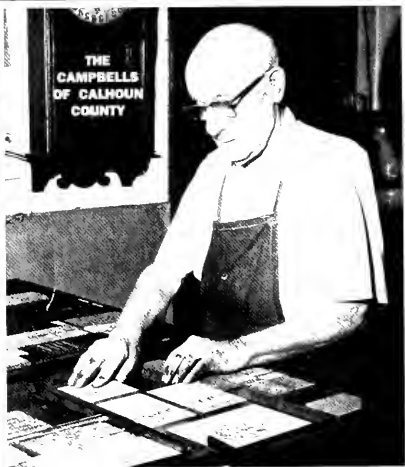
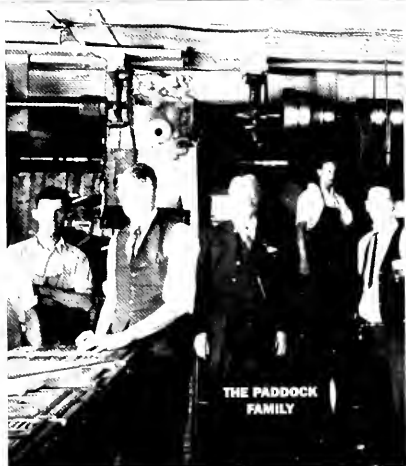
Chapter based on the book, "Country Editor — Influence of a Weekly Newspaper," written by Robert G. Hays, and published in 1974 by The Interstate Printers & Publishers, Inc. of Danville.

Printed by Havana Printing, Havana, Illinois

Editor/designer: Mike Miner



3 0112 097016999



An Illinois Press Foundation Publication